

FOR MEMBERS OF PEARL RIVER VALLEY ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION

TODAY IN MISSISSIPPI

PICTURE THIS: **Places of**
WORSHIP

PICAYUNE'S
ECOLOGICAL
PARADISE

MISSISSIPPI IN THE
GREAT DEPRESSION

A TALE OF TWO
PO' BOYS

JANUARY 2022

Continuing to change the quality of life in Mississippi

In the 1930s, farmers created electric cooperatives to bring electric power to rural areas across Mississippi. Now 80 years later, our electric cooperatives are bringing high-speed internet to rural areas, once again changing the quality of life for rural Mississippians.

The Broadband Enabling Act became legislation in January 2019; in less than three years, the electric cooperatives collectively have done a substantial amount of work to bridge the digital divide. Our co-ops are setting an example for the rest of the nation in deploying high-speed internet and providing quality internet service.

Seventeen electric cooperatives are working on implementing reliable high-speed internet in some capacity in their service territory and have formed subsidiaries to offer the services. These subsidiaries are securing and continuing to seek low interest financing and grants.

In 2020, The Mississippi Legislature awarded 15 electric cooperatives with grants provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) for the purpose of pilot projects in their service areas. Of that investment, \$160.1 million benefitted extremely rural areas and was funded as a match through the CARES Act — \$73.2 million in CARES Act money from the state and \$86.9 million matched by the cooperative subsidiaries.

These grants allowed the co-ops to test the viability of offering high-speed internet in some of the most rural areas of the state. It worked. In a brief 12 months, co-op subsidiaries strung 5,747 miles of fiber, passed 39,332 buildings, and connected 19,020 homes and businesses with high-speed internet. Another 900 plus customers are in the queue for service. More than 50% of the Mississippians who had access to the service took it.

With the success of the pilot projects, the subsidiary companies are currently

installing high-speed fiber technology across our state. Our co-ops are building the most reliable, technologically advanced high-speed internet systems possible.

The subsidiaries have spent \$255.9 million, in addition to the CARES Act, totaling a \$416 million investment so far. As of November 2021, more than 14,500 miles of fiber were installed, passing 148,352 homes; 46,823 homes are taking service, and 15,507 homes are in the queue to receive service, which is a 42% take rate and exceeds the goal of 32%.

Currently, we have a proposed plan in front of state lawmakers for grant funds that include 17 co-op subsidiaries expanding high-speed internet through 57 projects for a total cost of \$451 million between 2022 and 2026. The funds we are seeking are federal dollars earmarked for rural infrastructure projects and are slated for distribution through the states.

Ask your legislator to help co-ops continue to bring true, affordable high-speed internet to rural Mississippi.

I would like to thank our state legislators for their support over the past two years. They have shown great commitment to their constituents by supporting the cooperative subsidiaries' projects with funding, which has improved distance learning, telemedicine, and work from home opportunities.

The feature story for the magazine this month highlights the efforts made to bring electric power to rural Mississippians during the Great Depression. You will recognize the similarities in what took place 80 years ago, and our continued commitment to change the quality of life in rural Mississippi. ❁



by Michael Callahan

Executive Vice President/CEO
Electric Cooperatives
of Mississippi



Riding off into the sunset

Longtime Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi Graphic Designer Rickey McMillan has moved on to the next phase of his life.

Following 21 years of professional and exemplary service, Rickey has retired.

A key player in the creativity and hard work that makes *Today in Mississippi* a special statewide publication, to say Rickey will be missed by the co-op community is an understatement.

Ron Stewart, senior vice president of communications, has worked with Rickey for his entire time at ECM and known him ever longer.

"He's more of a friend instead of 'just' a co-worker. I've known Rickey since childhood as we were involved in the same church in the 1970s. We lost touch, so I was happy to get reconnected when he applied for a job in 2000," Ron said.

"He's very talented and has been a dedicated and loyal employee. He totally understands the cooperative network and served as an outstanding member of our electric cooperative family. He played a vital role in the success of *Today in Mississippi* and his willingness to put in extra time and effort to help us meet deadlines has demonstrated his commitment to excellence. Thanks for being such a valuable member to our team."

Following stints as the marketing director of the Metro Center Mall in Jackson, advertising manager at Gayfers, and fashion illustrator at McRae's, Rickey came to the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi to work as a graphic artist in 2000.

A stellar graphic artist and editorial page and advertisement designer, Rickey's skills stretched into the world of video.

In 2014, Rickey won two separate awards for his work on a 75th anniversary video for Singing River Electric. One of those awards came from the Southern Public Relations Federation and the other from the Public Relations Association of Mississippi.

Rickey said he's going to miss working at ECM because of the people.

"I know it sounds like a cliché, but it really is like a family here. I'm going to miss being with everybody. But I just think it's time," Rickey said.

Rickey's retirement will include time spent playing guitar (which he's done since he was 13), fishing and watercolor painting.

Rickey is also looking forward to spending more time with his family.

Rickey is married to Harriet McMillan. The couple has three children: Rachel, Daniel, and Rebecca as well as one 16-year-old grandson, Andrew.

"This never felt like work. I always enjoyed the job and I will miss it," Rickey said.

Plant cole crops now for winter vegetables

This red cabbage is in the same family as broccoli, kale, and other cole crops. It grows in winter gardens after summer crops succumb to freezing weather.

Even though I still have tomatoes and peppers producing in my home garden, I know these summer vegetables are on borrowed time. It's the time of year to appreciate the great cool-season vegetables we can grow.

From broccoli, cauliflower, kale, and collards to cabbage and Brussels sprouts, these vegetables are commonly called cruciferous or cole crops. I think they are delicious, especially after a freeze takes out my tomatoes and peppers.

The variety of shapes, sizes, and colors within this group of vegetables is amazing. But what is even more amazing is that these vegetables are all closely related genetically. In fact, they have a common ancestor.

Wild cabbage is a little plant from the region around the Mediterranean. Because of its nutritious foliage, farmers grew and domesticated selected plants based on their desired traits.

Over many, many thousands of years, we have developed leafy versions — kale and collards; buds — cabbage and Brussels sprouts; and flowers — broccoli and cauliflower.

As a group, they're known botanically as *Brassica oleracea*, and each has its own varietal designation: broccoli, *B. oleracea* var. *italica*; cauliflower, *B. oleracea* var. *botrytis*; kale, *B. oleracea* var. *sabellica*; collards, *B. oleracea* var. *viridis*; cabbage, *B. oleracea* var. *capitata*; and Brussels sprouts, *B. oleracea* var. *gemmifera*.

Because these vegetables are so closely related, they have similar growing needs and conditions.

The first is they don't like wet feet. Like so many of our landscape and garden plants in Mississippi, good soil drainage is a must. Raised beds are a great choice for good drainage, and adding composted materials creates an optimum planting bed.

I really like growing these plants in containers because of the superior growing media available that allows for good drainage.

I never have to worry about my plants having wet feet.

While we want good soil drainage, we can't let the plants dry out. These plants need consistent soil moisture to be productive. We're likely to have droughty weather during the winter months in Mississippi. In my Ocean Springs garden, we received less than 2 inches of rain in November.

Winter cold can rapidly deplete soil moisture. Apply mulch to help retain moisture, but be prepared to water as needed.

And here's a heads up: After watering, don't leave the hose attached to the spigot. Freezing temperatures can burst pipes pretty quickly.

For best growth of cruciferous vegetables, do not neglect fertilizing the plants.

These vegetables are heavy feeders all through the winter crop season. I like to add slow-release fertilizer at transplanting to get the plants off to a great start. Then I use a water-soluble fertilizer on a monthly schedule

to keep the plants healthy and growing strong.

Now is the time to pick up some transplants at your favorite independent garden center. Follow these tips to enjoy nutritious and tasty vegetables all through the winter gardening season. ❁



*Broccoli performs well in winter gardens. It is part of the *Brassica oleracea* family domesticated for what are actually flowers.*



by Dr. Gary Bachman

Gary Bachman, Ph.D., Extension/Research Professor of Horticulture at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi. He is also host of "Southern Gardening" radio and TV programs. He lives in Ocean Springs and is a Singing River Electric member.

scene around the 'sip

Crosby Arboretum:

An ecological paradise in our backyard

by Steven Ward

There are so many places to visit and “see the sights” in Mississippi that, sometimes, both tourists and locals need a reminder of all the hidden gems just waiting for discovery or rediscovery.

One of those gems sits on 64 acres in Picayune near Interstate 59.

The Crosby Arboretum is a public garden owned by Mississippi State University and operated by the MSU Extension Service and is a unit of the Coastal Research and Extension Center. The site offers both recreational and educational opportunities and is dedicated to educating the public about their environment as well as serving as a scientific and educational organization that documents and shares information about nature to the public. The Arboretum manages acreage in seven associated natural areas and supports over 300 species of plants.

The Crosby site functions as a celebration of local native flora. The Arboretum’s mission is to preserve, protect, and display plants native to the Pearl River Drainage Basin ecosystem.

The American Society of Landscape Architects awarded the site an ASLA award in 1991 calling it the “first fully realized ecological garden in the U.S.”

“Many times we’ve heard our visitors say, ‘I’ve always known you were here, but I never stopped in.’ Or, ‘I wish I had come 20 years ago, so I could have been enjoying it all this time.’ Visits to the Arboretum are much like peeling back the layers of an onion. No two days are alike. New creatures, blooms, and experiences are always waiting for you just around the



bend in the path,” Arboretum Director Pat Drackett said.

One of the highlights of the site is the award-winning Pinecote Pavilion designed by architect E. Fay Jones of Fayetteville, Arkansas. The structure received an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1990 and was recognized by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History as a Mississippi Landmark.

Some of the more recent visitor draws at the Arboretum include, The Gum Pond Bridge, a bridge spanning the headwaters inlet of the site’s gum pond and The Rosen Memorial Pavilion, accessed by a crisscrossing boardwalk that extends from the bulkhead of a new pond overlook.

A visit to the Arboretum means moving through exhibits on the pathways, or “landscape journeys.”

Visitors to the public garden who walk the three-mile trail system will travel through three main exhibits: a woodland exhibit, an aquatic exhibit, and a Savanna exhibit. Along the pathways, interpretive signage focuses on various coastal ecosystems and their values, and native plant communities and the species within them.

“My favorite area is the south pitcher plant bog, where changes are dynamic, plant populations, patterns, and textures are continually shifting due to fluctuations in moisture and are never the same from year to year,” Drackett said.

Drackett said the bog changes in color constantly.

“The bog will change from the blackened landscape following a prescribed fire, to the yellow pitcher plant blooms in early spring to the pinks and yellows of delicate spring ephemeral blossoms and orange and purple milkweeds,” Drackett said.

“This constant change is the reason behind the stories we hear about the magic experienced in visitors’ journeys — each walk brings unexpected and delightful discoveries.”

Visit crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu or call 601-799-2311 for more information.

AN END *and a beginning*

The old year just ended; the new year just began. All entities restricted to this temporal existence have a similar cycle — beginnings that eventually lead to endings. This realization prompts some measure of contemplation should we afford our thoughts the opportunity of mining



Spur (left) sleeps on his master's leg. Finn claimed his favorite chair! Photo courtesy of Bob Rose.

the depths and looking into shadowed corners that may too often be neglected in favor of comfort. I recently found myself on such an expedition.

The episode was my annual October woodcock hunt in Vermont. This is a challenging regimen and one closely monitored. Three birds daily, not much bounty for the effort some

might say, but to go, do, and see firsthand changes the perspective. It really is about the totality of experience.

My first hunt, close to a decade past, found me in the presence of a new acquaintance, Bob Rose. He was at that time a pilot for American Airlines and chose his schedules to keep October open. That was woodcock-hunting month. He is now retired. Bob employs Old Hemlock Setters as his chosen canine companions. The history of this breed is far too expansive for a treatise of this length, so I shall refrain. But one important element is that on that first hunt, Bob had a new dog, a dog that was just beginning his second season. Fionn Mac Cumhail, his registered name and the Old Irish pronunciation. Finn McCool in modern English. He answers to Finn.

Finn was a true marvel. A gentleman. A professional. A dog with perfect discipline and demeanor. I was mesmerized. And that remains the case even now. Finn is 11, not finished yet, but closer to the end than to the beginning.

On this most recent trip, Bob had added another Old Hemlock. Hotspur. He answers to Spur. He is 11 months old. And the makings are there. Spur is destined to the same levels of greatness as Finn has already achieved. This first season Spur still fumbled with the occasional puppy blunder, but not much. I watched and participated in three days of pure wonderment.

And during that watching and participating, I found myself mining those depths. I concluded I was more like Finn than I was like Spur. I am not finished, but I am definitely closer to the end than the beginning. I considered my admiration for Finn and felt a peculiar bond with him, we two on the same path of winding down. I celebrated with Spur, young, ready, and excited as I once was — just beginning an exhilarating life.

And, in all this thinking, I came to some point of resignation. Things would end, some more quickly than others. Regardless, life had been a spectacular experience. Finn knows that; Spur will know that. And I now give a nod of appreciation to both in the varying steps of their journeys. ❁



by Tony Kinton

Tony Kinton has been an active outdoors writer for 30 years. He lives in Carthage and is a Central Electric member. Visit www.tonykinton.com for more information.

Autumn in Vermont is spectacular. Colors, even in their brilliance, suggest an end. Spring will bring new life.



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Composer donates scores to **BLUES ARCHIVE**

by Lauren Rogers

Baltimore composer Larry Hoffman has donated a dozen of his musical scores to the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi.

While Hoffman has written many more works, the award-winning composer chose his blues- and American folk-infused classical compositions for the acclaimed collection.



"It is with great pride that I donate these scores to the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi," Hoffman said. "It is at once an honor, a vindication, and a great encouragement."

Greg Johnson, professor and curator of the Blues Archive at the J.D. Williams Library, has been

familiar with Hoffman's work for several years.

"I first discovered Larry's music on a compilation album from the late 1980s called 'Prelude in Blue,'" Johnson said. "The album caught my eye, because it was a classical music LP in one of the Blues Archive collections. I don't remember the other pieces on the record, but was struck by Larry's 'Blues for Harp, Oboe and Violoncello,' as it featured world-famous harpist Yolanda Kondonassis and oboist John Mack.

"Years later, *Living Blues* magazine asked me to review Larry's album 'Works of Larry Hoffman: Contemporary American Music.' With each of us having interests in the worlds of blues and classical music, we had a lot to talk about!"

From a young age, Hoffman was immersed in American folk music, listening to — and later playing — the music of the Weavers, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and the Everly Brothers. This grew into a passion for the blues. As a professional folk singer, Hoffman played for Mississippi John Hurt, and with Skip James and other bluesmen.

He also began his first formal study of music with jazz great John Coltrane's teacher, Dennis Sandole.

A large part of Hoffman's compositional style melds these seemingly disparate genres.

"My initial mission to become a composer was to infuse the contemporary classical language with the great power and dignity of the blues — if I could find a way," Hoffman said.

But blues is rarely represented in American concert music, he noted.

"Sadly, there is often prejudice against this integration in both the blues and classical worlds," Hoffman noted. "And yet, when I have been present at concerts where my blues-inspired pieces were programmed among serious works of the classical masters, audiences have uniformly shown a great appreciation of this blend of ideas."

Hoffman's music is helping to bridge that divide, Johnson said.

Hoffman was the principal writer for the liner notes to the 2003 "Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues" box set, which won Grammy Awards for "Best Liner Notes of the Year" and "Best Historical Compilation of the Year." He was also nominated for a Grammy for his writings in the "Mean Old World: The Blues from 1940-1994" box set.



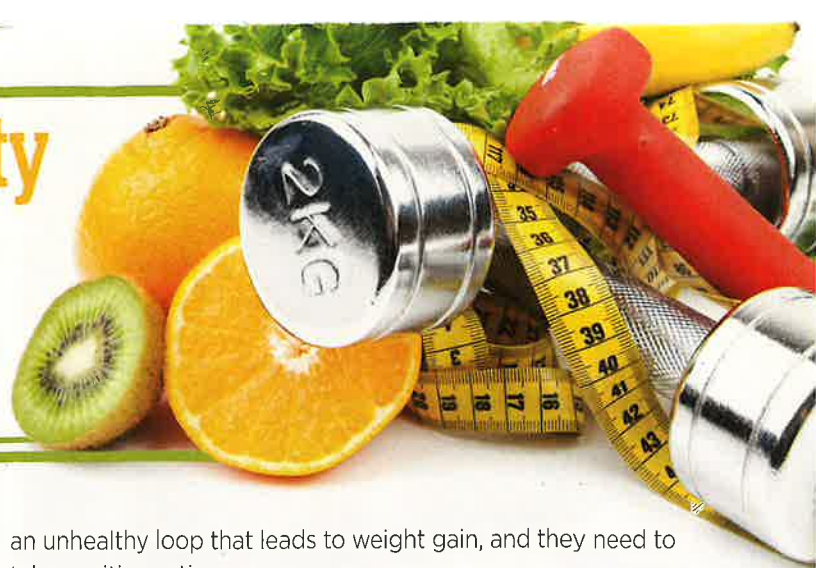
The scores donated by Hoffman are valuable additions to the archive, Johnson said.

"When I'm introducing new audiences to the blues, I often speak about its influence on other styles of music," he said. "I think Larry's compositions provide an interesting point of connection in speaking to some music students who have mostly been immersed in classical training. I think these compositions help demonstrate the reach of the blues outside typical spheres of influence. ✦"

Lauren Rogers is a library specialist in Archives and Special Collections at the University of Mississippi.



Smart eating, activity **BATTLE** extra pounds



by **Bonnie A. Coblentz**

For every reason to eat excessively, someone is pushing a diet plan to reverse the scales, but there's more to a healthy weight than consuming fewer calories and burning more energy.

Weight gain can be brought on by the holiday season, the "freshman 15," or the first year of marriage. In recent months, many have struggled with COVID-19 weight gain brought on by mental health struggles and isolation.



“

Good health includes physical activity and eating more vegetables and fruits, consuming less processed foods and sugar, and drinking more water.

David Buys, state health specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said there is a clear connection between stress and weight gain. Millions of people have been stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In a lot of ways, our struggle to stay physically healthy is connected to our mental health and well-being," Buys said.

He said living through the pandemic has caused nearly everyone to experience a loss of some kind, and those losses bring a heavy toll.

"There's been loss of routine, income, health, and friends and loved ones," Buys said. "It's upended our confidence and led many people to experience unusual levels of stress, anxiety, or depression.

"When that happens, some of us turn to comfort foods or just more convenient ways of eating that are not as nutritionally robust. In other cases, we may have a loss of appetite or will to be active," he said.

Qula Madkin, MSU Extension instructor and registered dietitian at the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Raymond, said people sometimes get caught in

an unhealthy loop that leads to weight gain, and they need to take positive action.

"Health is wealth, and I would like everyone to focus on their health — both gaining health and maintaining good health — rather than emphasizing weight loss," Madkin said.

Getting healthier requires an individual approach, she said, but being active whenever possible is a great starting place.

"I encourage people to go outside more often and do more activity outdoors," Madkin said.

Rather than recommending that people follow restrictive diets, Madkin suggests making lifestyle changes one small step at a time, focusing more on personal longevity and quality of life.

"In my opinion, people should really think less about weight loss and more about their health," Madkin said. "My goal is for people to be healthier. If I can help someone understand what that looks like for them, it can lead to weight loss, but weight loss does not necessarily equal health."

Madkin defined health as being physically active, drinking more water, eating more vegetables and fruits, and consuming less sugar and processed foods. It also includes self-care and having a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being.

When trying to set a weight loss goal, Madkin urged people to try for 5-10% of their body weight. For a 160-pound person, that would mean a goal of losing 8 to 16 pounds over a month or two.

"That is an excellent place to start," she said. "Set doable, relatable and reachable goals. Make sure they are goals that you can meet, and then you can push yourself to meet another goal after you have succeeded in your first goal."

In addition to healthy eating choices, good physical exercise is the next necessary component to losing weight and keeping it off.

"Find physical activity and movement opportunities that work for you," Madkin said. "Remember, you've been through a pandemic, so don't be so hard on yourself. Give yourself a pat on the back and make health happen for you." 🌱

Bonnie A. Coblentz is a writer/editor for the Mississippi State University Extension Service.



Here, the owner scoops pine resin from a settling vat and then pours it into barrels for shipment to various locations. However, for many lumber companies selling stumps from cutover lands, like Crosby Lumber and Manufacturing Company, the Naval Stores Conservation Program drastically reduced the buyers to few or none. In 1937, Crosby built a plant in Picayune, and Crosby Naval Stores grew to 600 tons of stumps a day, the third-largest in the United States.



The sharecropping system in Mississippi was the subject of many Farm Security Administration images. Photographs detailed city street scenes, extravagant brick, and rustic wooden churches, cotton picking in the Delta fields, payday at plantation commissaries, and the lives of poor whites and black sharecroppers and their families.

Depression in Mississippi

America's rural population was at its most disadvantaged during the Great Depression. Only 10% of rural Americans had electricity, and the number was 1% in Mississippi.

"Without electricity, perishable food spoiled, and sanitation suffered. Urban areas enjoyed electric lights, washing machines, and refrigerators, but rural Mississippians struggled through grueling days with only sunlight and kerosene in their primitive environment. They lit their lanterns before sunrise, and when darkness fell to begin and finish their labor," Putnam said.

Although the need for rural electrification was evident, private investors and companies didn't want the task and expense of running lines into rural Mississippi without reaping a profit. And rural residents didn't make enough money to do it themselves, even with pooling their money.

The Roosevelt administration created the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a federal electric company and the Rural

Electrification Administration, which offered loans to rural farmers and community leaders to provide power in rural areas.

Today, the TVA and, in south Mississippi, Cooperative Energy generate and deliver power to the state's 25 electric cooperatives. Cooperative Energy, formally known as the South Mississippi Electric Power Association, formed in 1941.

Two key Mississippi movers and shakers behind bringing power to rural Mississippi were U.S. Sen. Pat Harrison from the Gulf Coast and U.S. Rep. John Rankin of Tupelo.

"Sen. Harrison and Rep. Rankin advocated heartily for electric power distribution in Mississippi. They would also

welcome President Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor to Mississippi to tour New Deal projects, like the new homesteads and the TVA, which began rural electrification in Mississippi.



Known by his colleagues as "The Old Fox," referring to backroom persuasive power and strategic maneuverings, U.S. Sen. Pat Harrison of Mississippi helped shape much of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal legislation.

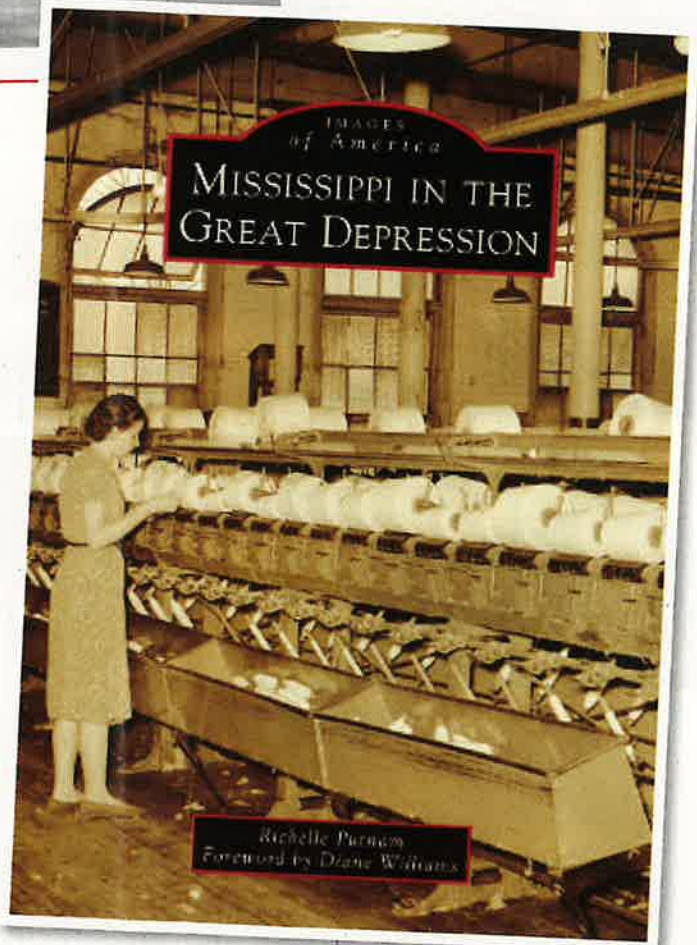


Two months after the approval of the TVA Act by President Roosevelt in May of 1933, U.S. Rep John Rankin of Mississippi, TVA Chairman David Lilienthal, and the *Tupelo Journal* reported that implementation of public power in northeast Mississippi was a distinct possibility as early as the fall of 1933. TVA, the prime investor in nuclear power and the principal user of coal, was the leading producer of electric power in the country. On February 7, 1934, Tupelo became the first municipality in the U.S. to receive TVA power.

Other Great Depression-era improvements to Mississippi included action by Gov. Mike Connor, who initiated measures to improve the treatment of inmates at Parchman Prison in the Delta. Women also played an active role. The Natchez Garden Club successfully spurred tourism by starting the state's first pilgrimage in 1932. Mississippians found employment through the Public Works Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, which stimulated economic development through new and add-on construction in urban and rural areas and the construction of nine state parks.

When asked if there were any lessons learned or to be learned by Mississippi from the Great Depression, Putnam said the power and influence of Roosevelt and the New Deal was immense.

"There was political, social, economic, and cultural cooperation for the common good of all Americans and, of course, Mississippians. President Franklin D. Roosevelt served four terms in office and is still considered one of America's most influential and beloved presidents. We can argue all day about the pros and cons of his administration's New Deal. However, the fact remains that the American people, including over 90% of Mississippians, voted him into office more than any other president in American history," she said.



Visit arcadiapublishing.com for more information about the book.

Author Richelle Putnam



10. Presbyterian Church in Toccoola by **Sherry Sledge** of Pontotoc; Pontotoc Electric member.
11. Albans Church in Bovine by **Denise Jackson** of Wesson; Southern Pine Electric member.
12. St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Raymond by **Margaret Wilson** of Byhalia; Northcentral Electric Cooperative member.
13. China Grove Church in Kokomo by **Renee Timmons** of Kokomo; Pearl River Valley Electric member.
14. Bethel Black Jack Baptist Church in Vaughan by **David Shipp** of Midway; Yazoo Valley Electric member.
15. French Camp Presbyterian Church in French Camp by **Larry Littlejohn** of French Camp; 4-County Electric member.
16. St. Pierre's Episcopal Church in Gautier by **Scott Lenoir** of Gautier; Singing River Electric member.
17. Christ Church in Christ Hill by **Teresa Lott** of Perkinston; Pearl River Valley Electric member.
18. Gillsburg Baptist Church in Gillsburg by **Donna Williams** of Osyka; Magnolia Electric Power member.



Fried shrimp po' boy with onion rings Serves four

I love a big po' boy on a Saturday for lunch. By frying the onion rings before the shrimp, the oil gets seasoned and gives the shrimp a special savory flavor.

I like to use a blend of flour, cornstarch, and seafood breading mix to coat the shrimp and onion rings. The flour coats them well. The cornstarch gives extra crunch, and the seafood seasoning adds some southern-style cornmeal flavor without any grittiness.

Using a combination of prepared yellow mustard and eggs to act as a "glue" to hold the coating in place works wonderfully well. The mustard does not impart a strong flavor because the vinegar and water in the mustard evaporates when fried.

I like a combo of shredded iceberg and fresh cabbage to provide a fresh crunch. ❄️

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large, sweet onions (Vidalia or Walla Walla) cut into rings
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup corn starch
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fish fry seafood breading mix (I like Louisiana or Zatarain's brands made with corn flour)
- 1 tablespoon Creole seasoning blend
- 1 cup yellow mustard
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons hot pepper sauce (I like Crystal)
- 2 pounds large (31/35) peeled, deveined shrimp
- 1 quart oil for frying
- 4 (8-inch) French bread loaves or po'boy rolls sliced lengthwise
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocktail sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded iceberg lettuce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cabbage

Soak onion rings in a large bowl of ice water for 30 minutes. Drain the onions. Carefully remove the thin membrane from the inner wall of each piece of onion. Pat onions dry with paper towel. Return the onion rings to the bowl.

In a medium shallow bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, breading mix, and Creole seasoning and set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together the mustard, egg, and hot sauce. Pour 1 cup of the mustard mixture over the onions. Toss to coat. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the flour mixture over the rings and toss to coat. Toss occasionally to keep the onions coated.

Add the shrimp to the remaining mustard mixture and toss to coat.

Heat oil to 400 degrees. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Line a sheet pan with crumpled brown paper sacks.

Working in small batches, take onion rings from mustard mixture allowing extra to drip back into remaining onions.

Coat onion rings with flour mixture. Shake off any excess coating. Fry onion rings until golden brown. Remove to drain on paper lined sheet pan. Pour any leftover mustard mixture from the onions into the remaining mustard mixture.

Working in batches, take the shrimp from the mustard mixture allowing excess to drip off and coat with the flour mixture pressing the shrimp into the mixture to coat.

Fry the shrimp for 2 to 3 minutes or until slightly curled and golden brown. Drain on paper lined sheet pan.

Spread the cut sides of each piece of bread very lightly with mayonnaise. Toast in oven cut side up until crusty and browned. Spread bottom of each cut side with cocktail sauce. Top with shrimp, lettuce, and cabbage. Spread each top with mayonnaise and stack the sandwiches. Serve with onion rings.

A piece of Pearl Harbor history at home

So, after the first of January, how long did it take before you wrote the correct year on your papers at school? Or finally put the right date on a check the first time?

Year-long habits are hard to break.

It's funny the snippets you remember from childhood.

Daddy had a brother who lived with us off and on. I don't remember much about him. But I vividly recall one day he grabbed a page of the kitchen calendar and announced he was going to make it into a new month and ripped it off. I wasn't sure what to make of that. Can you do that? Does changing the calendar make

time change? Or does the passing of time change the calendar?

Later, when I'd recall this episode, I figured it was probably the first of the month, anyway. I think all of his verbosity was an attempt to put one over on a little kid — that he had some superpower over time and

the cosmos. Maybe it was even a subconscious rebellion over the inevitability of the passing of time. But he wanted to make it look like it was his idea. Like he controlled it instead of the other way around.

Another byproduct of time passing is museums. You don't put new stuff in a museum. It has to age and take on the patina and esteem that only the passing of time can give it.

We were shooting another "Mississippi Roads" show the other day at the Laurel Veterans Memorial Museum. There are exhibits there from the Civil War all the way through both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf Wars, and more.

One of the artifacts they have is an actual piece of the superstructure from the USS Arizona that was sunk in the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 (80 years ago last month) that culminated in bringing the United States into World War II. When the Arizona Memorial was constructed in the 1960s, some of the superstructure



was removed from the ship, and the Navy donated some pieces of it to qualified veteran's organizations. One of those pieces is in Mississippi.

The wooden case in which it is housed is sort of a museum piece itself. The case was built by Ben Napier from wood removed from the deck of the USS Missouri, as well as Piney Woods pine from Mississippi. You will recall Ben and his wife Erin host the HGTV show "Home Town" featuring the fantastic renovations they have been doing with the homes and buildings in Laurel.

I suppose that's another by-product of time passing — renovations. If time stood still, we wouldn't need to remodel what deteriorated over time. But we might end up like "The Chronicles of Narnia," where it was always winter but never Christmas. So, since it is going to happen anyway, enjoy the passing of time. Remember the things you choose to and impress your grandkids by making the month change every now and again. ❄️



by Walt Grayson

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